DEMOCRATIC

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PLEBISCITE ON UNARMED GERMANY

Chairman Ulbricht Sketches GDR Policy

A plebiscite should be held in the whole of Germany on the total disarmament and neutralisation of the two German states, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, proposed in a wide-ranging government declaration to the People's Chamber on October 4th. In the course of his speech, which was unanimously approved by the People's Chamber, he outlined the reasons why the German Democratic Republic claimed to be the legitimate German state, dealt in detail with the West Berlin problem, and explained the reasons for the establishment of the GDR State Council after the death of Wilhelm Pieck, first and only President of the GDR. Some of the main points of his speech are given on this and the following pages: owing to the great length of the declaration, those sections dealing with the State Council and internal problems of the GDR have been held over for our next issue.

GDR AMNESTY FOR 12,000

A total of 12,000 prisoners in the GDR will be amnestied and released during the next two months, the State Council of the GDR decided on October 1st.

The amnesty will affect persons sentenced to less than one year imprisonment, persons sentenced to up to three years who have served half their sentences, and persons sentenced to more than three years who have served two-thirds of their sentences. It will be effective for the prisoners in these categories who have shown that they are not likely to break the law in future.

Remission of sentences will be given to prisoners who were blackmailed by western secret services into offences against the laws of the German Democratic Republic.

Special measures will be taken to provide released prisoners with suitable work, and to incorporate them again in the social life of the Republic.

1. Plebiscite on Disarmament

"A group of West German citizens, concerned about the preservation of peace, have proposed in a letter addressed to me that a plebiscite should be held in the whole of Germany on the general and complete disarmament of the country.

"I believe that we should accept this proposal. It would be a very good thing if the German people, in both German states, were to have the opportunity for declaring publicly their opinion in this manner. I am firmly convinced that the great majority of the West German population would decide in favour of peace and disarmament, and the Bonn regime could not disregard such a clear vote.

"I am also convinced that this proposal will find the approval of the People's Chamber of the GDR, and our entire population. We shall take steps in this matter as soon as sufficient preparations have been made for such a plebiscite in West Germany in the factories, the trade unions, and everywhere else where people who are interested in peace come together. The people of the GDR have always voted for peace, and will do so in this case too.

2. Self-Determination for W. Germany

"President Eisenhower stated in the General Assembly of the United Nations that the peoples should be allowed to decide freely on their fate. I should like to give this answer to Mr Eisenhower: You are the representative of a country the government of which partitioned our state, which founded the West German separatist state as a territory for the use of aggressive American military policy. Your Government and the dependent West German Government obstinately prevent any agreement between the two German states and their peaceful reunification. You obstinately refuse the West German people even the most primitive right of self-determination, the right to decide its own fate. Your Government, and the West German satellite government dependent upon it refused the West German people the right to decide on such decisive questions as the Paris War Treaties, conscription, adhesion to NATO, atomic arms and the conclusion of a peace treaty, not to mention your tearing up of the principles of the Potsdam Agreement.

I call upon you, Mr President, finally to give West Germany freedom, to vacate the US bases in West Germany, and to allow the West German people the right of self-determination on peace, liberty and democracy. The cause of peace in Europe will benefit therefrom.

3. The GDR – Legitimate German State

"Can the West German state be regarded as a legitimate German state? In West Germany the principles of the Potsdam Agreement, which should prevent the revival of German militarism, have been sabotaged. Can a German state in which peace is persecuted, and in which the interests of American imperialism take first place, be regarded as legitimate?

"No. The West German Federal Republic is not legitimate.

"The only German state which can rightly claim to be legitimate is the one which has learned the lessons of history and has implemented the Potsdam Agreement. In the German Democratic Republic those circles which drove the German people into two world wars have been deprived of power. The legitimate German state is the German Democratic Republic.

"Anyone who disputes the legitimacy of the German Democratic Republic throws doubt upon the justice of the international struggle against Hitler's murderous regime, the policy of which is being continued in West Germany.

"The policy pursued by the German Democratic Republic is in accordance with the international treaties, in particular the Potsdam Agreement.

"From this state of affairs we must draw the following conclusion: The main contradiction in Germany is between the interests of the people of the GDR and all peace-loving persons in West Germany on the one hand, and the forces of militarism and revenge in West Germany on the other. This contradiction can only be resolved by the muzzling of German militarism, disarmament, and the conclusion of a peace treaty with the two German states, which will make it possible to overcome the partitioning of our nation.

4. The GDR and the United Nations

"The United Nations Organisation in its present composition is far from presenting a true picture of the real relation of forces in the world. The seat which should be occupied by the representatives of the great Chinese people is occupied by a little American puppet from Taiwan (Formosa). The legitimate German state, the GDR, has not yet got a seat or a vote in the UN. The same is true of the Mongolian People's Republic and other socialist countries which are denied by the imperialists the right to co-decision on world affairs. Despite these factors, the progress in the UN is unmistakeable. In the long run, despite all sabotage on the part of the USA, the real relations of strength in the world will be reflected in the United Nations.

"We are grateful to the representatives of the socialist states, Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, and the representatives of other neutral states who have taken such a convincing position on the German question at the UN General Assembly. The GDR Memorandum on the complete disarmament of Germany has been submitted to all delegates, and has been much discussed. In this way the German Democratic Republic and the peace forces in the whole of Germany have made their voices heard at the General Assembly.

5. The Key Position of Germany –

"Today in Europe the only state to make territorial claims is West Germany. Only in West Germany are those militarist forces at work which prepared and launched World War Two; however, the policy of these forces receives the support of the present government of the USA. If the governments of the USA, Britain and France would finally cease giving their support to the war preparations of the West German militarists, and if the governments of these states were ready to cooperate in the conclusion of a peace treaty with the two German states, then peace would be assured in Germany and Europe.

"Germany occupies a very special position. The two main forces in the world today, the socialist states headed by the Soviet Union, and the imperialist states headed by the USA, have their direct point of contact in Germany. All our internal differences have their effect on the interests of these two main world forces. This particular position means that we have a vital interest in the peaceful coexistence of states of differing social systems, and a vital interest in complete disarmament. Any conflict between the two great powers, whether about a German question or not, would take place on German soil as long as US troops are stationed there, and as long as West Germany belongs to NATO. It is for this reason that it is so insane to equip the West German state with atomic weapons.

6. The West Berlin Question

"Allow me to say a few words about the real situation of West Berlin. Berlin lies on the territory of the GDR; anyone can see this by looking at a map. The whole of Berlin legally belongs to the territory of the GDR. Not only this, but for eleven years Berlin has been the capital of the German Democratic Republic. In this period even the sleepy foreign ministries of some of the western powers really should have become aware of this fact. The Constitution of the GDR (adopted in 1949, ed.) names Berlin as the capital; that is why it is so silly for some people to pretend that the people of the GDR only had the idea of making Berlin their capital in 1960.

"We do not deny, however, that one part of our capital, West Berlin, has taken a different path of social development from that taken in the GDR; it has fallen a whole epoch behind in the form of society prevailing, it is occupied by the troops of the three western powers, and is subject to their occupation statute. In addition West Berlin is systematically misused as a centre of revenge propaganda and subversion aimed against the GDR and other socialist countries.

"For a long period we adopted an unduly liberal attitude towards this state of affairs. This has led some people to draw the incorrect conclusion that they can do what they like

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A MESSAGE FOR MACMILLAN

Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, addressed himself directly to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in his declaration to the People's Chamber of the Republic on October 4th. He stated:

"In his address to the UN General Assembly in New York, British Prime Minister Macmillan, under pressure from the West German Government, attempted to defend the Bonn militarists and revenge politicians.

"He produced two 'proofs' of the alleged peaceful nature and lack of dangerousness of the Bonn regime: firstly, that Adenauer's Government had declared in 1954 that it renounced the use of force; and secondly, that NATO controlled the atomic weapons, thus making it impossible for the West German Federal Republic to go it alone.

"I should like to point out to Mr Macmillan that the 'renunciation of force' is simply a camouflage manoeuvre. Hitler too liked to chatter about peace, in order to prepare the Second World War behind a smoke-screen of peaceful phrases. Hitler's policy was carried out by the same people who today hold leading positions in West Germany in the army, navy and air force, and in the government. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the methods and the aims of the Adenauer Government are a continuation of the Hitlerite policy of war and conquest.

"I find it difficult to believe, Mr Macmillan, that you are so badly informed that you believe the Hitlerite generals and revenge politicians in West Germany to be angels of peace. As the Polish leader W. Gomulka stated in the UN General Assembly a few days ago, Adenauer would find it easier to determine the sex of the angels than to explain convincingly how he intends to carve up Poland without using a knife.

"With regard to NATO control of atomic weapons, I should like to remind Mr Macmillan that the West German Hitlerite generals and admirals occupy the most important key positions in NATO, and that it is the declared intention of the West German militarists to provoke their war in such a way that the other NATO powers would be dragged into the bloody and suicidal adventure, even against their will.

"As representatives of the peace-loving and democratic Germany, we regard with great bitterness the aid and succour given by the British Government to the militarists of Bonn, the worst enemies of humanity.

"We must recall that over twenty years ago a British Prime Minister journeyed to Munich. He encouraged the German fascists to carve up Czechoslovakia and to unleash the Second World War. Mr Neville Chamberlain and Lord Home, the present British Foreign Minister, gave encouragement to Hitler and Goering. Today you, Mr Macmillan, and you, Lord Home, are giving encouragement to Strauss and Speidel and Heusinger, who are no wit better. Your predecessor, Mr Chamberlain, had the illusion that by his actions he could keep Britain out of war.

"You, Mr Macmillan, can have no such illusion. Today, because of the rocket bases and other aggressive bases on British territory, Britain would be immediately dragged into a war provoked by Bonn. We do not dislike the British people, and for this reason we are glad to note that broad sections of the British population obviously do not agree with the policy of Mr Macmillan and Lord Home. The powerful trade union movement and serious Liberal and Conservative forces have opposed the atomic armament of West Germany, and have given their support to general and total disarmament."

on our territory. Recently the misuse of West Berlin for revenge propaganda and subversion has reached an unbearable degree, particularly since the Summit Conference was prevented by the USA and the Bonn Government.

"We issued a number of warnings, and then we took measures to stop the provocateurs, and to help the citizens of the whole of Berlin live and work in peace and calm.

"The measures taken by the Government of the GDR are directed against militarists and revenge-propagandists, and are in full accordance with the Potsdam Agreement and the United Nations Charter. We are in favour of liberty, but not of liberty for militarists and revenge-seekers, particularly when they want to perform their war dances in the capital of the GDR.

7. Quadripartite Statute in Berlin?

"The western powers have protested against the GDR measures, basing themselves upon the alleged quadripartite statute. When we established the German Democratic Republic (in 1949), nobody drew our attention to a quadripartite statute, since this no longer existed.

"It is perfectly true that Berlin had a special quadripartite status in 1945, since it was the seat of the Allied Control Council which was charged with tasks affecting the whole of Germany. It was the western powers themselves who broke the Potsdam Agreement, partitioned Germany, and dissolved the Allied Control Council and its Berlin organisation. When the Allied Control Council ceased to exist, the quadripartite administration of Berlin came to an end, both de facto and de jure. The western powers have confirmed this fact by establishing a special tripartite status for West Berlin.

"The note of the Soviet Government of September 26th 1960 referring to Berlin traffic stated:

"The Government of the USA knows that under the treaty concluded between the USSR and the GDR on September 20th 1955, the GDR enjoys full powers and right of decision on the territory lying under its sovereignty, including the capital of the GDR, in questions of internal and foreign policy including relations with the German Federal Republic. This applies fully to questions of the traffic of the German population between the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic; these questions can only be decided upon by the German states themselves."

"At the same time the Soviet Government pointed out that the New York Agreement of May 1949 on traffic to and from Berlin

"was concluded during the occupation period in Germany, at a time when the questions of German traffic between Berlin and the former occupation zone of Germany were settled by the authorities of the four powers. Since the establishment of two German states these questions are exclusively a matter for the relevant German authorities."

"The Soviet Garrison Commander in Berlin is responsible solely for the Soviet garrison. He has no compe-

tence with regard to the capital of the German Democratic Republic and the activities of its city administration.

"In West Berlin the situation is basically different. There the three western powers exercise an occupation regime with the aid of an occupation statute, and the commandants control the work of the West Berlin authorities.

"The demand made by some aggressive militarist circles in Washington and Bonn that the whole of Berlin should be regarded as occupied territory cannot be taken seriously. Instead of ending the occupation regime in West Berlin these aggressors wish to extend their occupation to the Democratic Sector of the capital of the German Democratic Republic.

"I should like to state most emphatically that there has never been any quadripartite status in the capital of the German Democratic Republic, which has now been in existence for eleven years.

"The GDR is a sovereign state. For eleven years Berlin has been the capital of this sovereign state. The former western occupation powers will just have to get used to this.

"I would like to recommend that these former occupation powers should soberly survey their real interests in various fields, and then discuss with the Government of the GDR the possibilities of protecting these interests. We have no intention of being miserly in this regard, but we cannot permit our rights of sovereignty to be infringed.

"We should like to give the West Berlin City Administration the good advice not to submit to pressure from the militarists in Bonn. This never pays. The West Berlin authorities should take steps to see to it that the Bonn offices and spy agencies, which have installed themselves illegally in West Berlin, are withdrawn.

8. Trade Between the Two German States

"Now that Bonn's revenge-propagandists are no longer able to appear unsupervised in the capital of the GDR, the Bonn Government has taken this as an excuse to demand that the western powers take economic measures against the GDR.

"The Bonn Government has decided to cancel, as of December 31st 1960, the trade agreement on inner-German trade (trade between the GDR and West Germany, ed.). What has this trade got to do with the passage of militarists from West German to West Berlin? Goods are passing quite normally over the territory of the GDR to West Berlin, and even the West Berlin administration has not complained. The only thing which has been stopped has been the journeyings of SS men and SA men, people who learned nothing from the lessons of history.

"The decision taken by Bonn to interrupt inner-German trade is an aggressive act. We are convinced that the majority of the West German businessmen who are interested in trade with the GDR will reject anything which would make reunification even more difficult. We are also convinced that businessmen in other states will refuse to be drawn into an economic war in the interests of a handful of West German militarists and neo-nazis.

"The Ministry of Foreign and Inner-German Trade of the GDR is ready at any time to negotiate with the West Berlin authorities on trade questions, and on guarantees for normal commercial transport facilities between West Berlin and other states. We are ready to negotiate with representatives of the Bonn Government on extension of trade, on commercial transit traffic from West Germany through the GDR, on a basis of equality. In the case of such negotiations the representatives of the GDR would propose that West Germany should refrain from exerting pressure

BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

GDR Government Relations With Churches

Chairman Walter Ulbricht dealt at some length in his speech with the relations between the Government of the GDR and the various religious bodies. He stated:

"The members of the Evangelical Church, the Catholic Church and the Jewish community have every opportunity in the GDR to pursue their religious practices in their churches and synagogues. As you know, Evangelical Church leaders have concluded with the Government of the GDR a protocol which makes possible normal relations between the church and the state. A similar arrangement with the leadership of the Catholic Church in the GDR has not yet been reached, owing to the influence of militaristically-inclined clericalism steered from Bonn.

"We cannot close our eyes to the fact that the cooperation previously possible between the Government of the GDR and the West German so-called (Evangelical) church leadership has become impossible as a result of the close connection of church circles with militarism and NATO policy, and the propaganda of leading West German church figures in favour of the atom war policy of the Bonn state. This has nothing to do with our attitude towards the church, however.

"I am glad to be able to state that there is a growing understanding amongst an increasing number of important Evangelical Church leaders in the GDR with regard to our attitude towards the West German NATO politicians in religious robes. The church authorities in the GDR are becoming more and more convinced of the correctness of the policy of the Government of the GDR, which is governed by a love of peace and the principles of genuine humanity.

"In the course of the present year pastors, theologists and many other church figures in many parts of the GDR have helped to encourage Christian peasants to take the right path towards a socialist future. When the harvest was endangered by bad weather, church leaders such as Bishop Mitzenheim and Bishop Krumacher called upon their flocks to help in saving the crops. Pastors and church officials went out into the fields of the agricultural production cooperatives, and helped to bring in the sheaves of the first fully-cooperative harvest.

"We regard this as a sign that the Evangelical Church in the GDR has a growing understanding of the aims and the tasks of our socialist community. There is no contradiction between Christianity and the humanist aims of socialism. Christianity, which was once the religion of the poor, the religion of peace, has for hundreds of years been misused by the ruling class. Today it is misused in West Germany by the forces of militarism to support the policy of atomic armament. The old longing, expressed in the text: 'On earth peace, good will toward men' can only be brought to pass by implementing the great ideals of humanism and socialism."

on other states to prevent them adopting normal relations with the GDR. (Chairman Ulbricht was referring to the West German 'Hallstein Doctrine' under which West Germany breaks relations with any state recognising the GDR, ed.)

"The internal affairs of the capital of the German Democratic Republic have nothing at all to do with the Bonn Government. We make no demands about the internal affairs of Bonn, the capital of the West German Federal Republic, or its means of communication.

"The peaceful solution of the West Berlin question, the abolition of the occupation statute in West Berlin, and the step-by-step withdrawal of the occupation troops are questions which should be discussed as soon as possible between the Four Powers in connection with the preparation of a peace treaty.

"We should like to make it as easy as possible for the western powers to reach a sensible decision. We believe that the time has really come for the western former occupation powers to reconsider their whole political attitude towards the West Berlin question: we hope that they will agree to the reasonable compromise, the establishment of the demilitarised West Berlin Free City. This solution will come about inevitably, in one way or the other, sooner or later."

PAUL ROBESON HONOURED

Paul Robeson was welcomed in Democratic Germany's capital in early October with standing ovations from crowded audiences and with a series of honours climaxed by the award of the Star of International Friendship. Robeson was the first person to receive this newly-created GDR order.

Among other honours received by the great American Negro singer were the German Peace Medal, the "Medal for Resistance Fighters Against Fascism 1933—1945" and an honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Berlin's Humboldt University.

The award of the doctorate was in recognition of Paul Robeson's singing, his dramatic interpretations of Shakespeare, and the use of his talents in the struggle for peace, against fascism, and for the equality and friendship of all people.

Robeson answered with a short speech of thanks which recalled his father who, born a slave, had later fought slavery in the American Civil War. He also spoke in the name of millions of people in Africa, Asia and America fighting for freedom and a decent life. He concluded with a song.

At a large youth rally that evening, enthusiasm rose even higher, especially when the great singer stepped out of the audience to join a group of African students on the stage in several steps of an African dance. His songs at the end of the evening brought down the house. Other high points were the greetings from Helene Weigel, the widow of Bertolt Brecht, the friendly embrace between the huge singer and the little actress, and the award of the International Friendship Star by Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council.

On October 7th, the 11th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, Robeson ended his visit by singing to many tens of thousands of people on East Berlin's huge Marx-Engels Square.

Africans Study in GDR

Seventy African trade unionists began special study courses on trade union problems and organisation at a new institute which opened in Leipzig in Democratic Germany on September 22nd. Called the Institute for Foreign Studies, the school is sponsored by the Free German Trade Union Federation. Speakers at the opening ceremonies stressed that this was a measure by the people of the German Democratic Republic to show their support for the people of Africa in winning and keeping full independence.

Unionists Celebrate

Top trade union leaders from Congo, Japan and Democratic Germany spoke at a demonstration celebrating the 15th anniversary of the World Federation of Trade Unions in the young steel city of Stalinstadt on October 3rd. The speakers included Akira Iwai, General Secretary of SOHYO, the largest Japanese trade union federation, Maurice Kasongo, General Secretary of the Congo trade union federation, and Herbert Warnke, head of the Free German Trade Union Federation.

You Ask — We Answer

FOREIGN TRAVEL

"Are the people of East Germany allowed to visit other countries, including western countries? . . ."

T. K., Copenhagen

Yes, more and more are visiting foreign countries every year, in fact. There have been difficulties in getting visas to western countries which do not recognise the GDR diplomatically, so most foreign travel has been to countries friendly to the GDR, but even here the picture is slowly changing.

The German Travel Agency of the GDR, which handles most visits abroad, has arranged about 160,000 trips already this year. 61,000 of these were private trips to relatives in many different countries of the world. About 100,000 were holiday trips — some very short to neighbouring Czechoslovakia, some very long to far-off China. They included this year:

18,000 trips to Bulgaria, 13,000 to the Soviet Union, 1000 to Yugoslavia, 200 to China, 200 to Egypt (UAR), 128 to India. Other countries visited included Finland, Austria, Albania, Poland, North Korea and several thousand who took the Baltic Sea ferry trip to Sweden and spent several hours there before returning.

In addition to the 160,000 who arranged their trips with the German Travel Bureau, many additional thousands went on an exchange basis with colleagues from other countries. Many young people went hiking with tents and bicycles, groups of students played host to others studying the same subject, also on an exchange basis, and many took advantage of the new trade union voyages to Mediterranean ports in winter and Baltic ports in summer.

New methods of enlarging foreign travel possibilities are constantly being explored, for there is a wide interest in seeing the world on the part of the citizens of the GDR.

Soap Gets in Your Eyes

A shampoo for children which does not hurt if it gets in their eyes was developed recently by the chemical industry of the German Democratic Republic. Other products now being offered for sale include a moth-prevention product which is laundered into clothing and keeps moths away for a year without any adverse aroma for human noses.

A Krupp Factory Under Socialism

By Allen Mann

Some socialists in western countries may believe that all factories under socialism are palatial structures with shiny work halls and an idyllic atmosphere.

As I could see during a recent trip to a huge factory in the city of Magdeburg (on the Elbe River in Democratic Germany) — this is unfortunately not true. This very important factory, at least, is noisy, in some departments quite dirty and is in general composed of the same uninspired red brick buildings and chimneys as many other factories all over the world, east and west.

Not only that — I found that the engineering workers here are just as interested in making an extra mark or two as their colleagues in other lands in earning a few extra shillings, dollars or rupees. Nor have they always forgotten some of the methods they once learned unter capitalism to juggle a few figures on piece-work results or waiting time.

And yet, my visit showed that there are quite definitely differences between "then and now" or "here and there". Despite frequent problems and difficulties a new way of life is really developing in the factories here.

The first difference is right at the main gate. This factory, once the "Krupp-Gruson Works", used to be one of the Krupp Empire's main strongholds for the manufacture of heavy tanks and anti-aircraft artillery. But now Krupp's name, which still sends hate and fear into the hearts of millions, has been replaced by that of Ernst Thaelmann. His name also brought fear and hate to some people — the nazis. That is why they jailed the famous German Communist leader for 11 years and finally murdered him in Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1944. The plant's name is now "VEB Ernst Thaelmann Heavy Engineering Plant". The abbreviation "VEB" means "owned by the people".

But names are not conclusive. Here are some of the other things I saw.

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Before entering the factory proper I was shown one of the factory's two kindergartens. Every major plant in the GDR has its own kindergarten, they are usually included in all visits and tours, and this sunny, pleasantly-decorated building was not much different from the others, except that it was very large, with 8 groups of 25 children and two or three trained teachers each. These are the children of women who work in the factory. I wondered what the mothers of all the children at the two kindergartens and the adjacent nursery were doing in a factory making heavy machinery, but saved the question for later.

As for the children themselves, they were certainly anything but bashful and retiring; they welcomed all strangers by waving, calling out greetings, laughing and even by singing a song in one group.

In cases where the parents are for some reason unable to fetch the children in the evening, there are provisions for some children to stay overnight. And all this care and attention, including meals, is paid for by the factory. The parents pay nothing. The kindergarten represents another difference between this and private factories.

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The first impression I received after entering the main grounds of the Ernst Thaelmann Plant is of its huge size. The largest machinery-producing plant in the republic, it covers over one-half square mile and employs more than 10,000 men and women. While walking through parts of it I was forced to dodge between vehicles of every kind, from bicycles and little British Massey-Ferguson trucks up to the big locomotives which criss-crossed the grounds, pulling their freight cars with loads of coal, steel or machine parts.

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And then, wherever I walked inside or outside the factory buildings, there were the huge overhead cranes, gliding back and forth like monstrous spiders along their massive steel girder webs.

Looking closer, I noticed that the female element was very much in control in this sphere, just as with real spiders. Almost every occupant of the little cabins with the crane controls was a woman. In most western countries this is a man's domain, but here it is the women who "carry" the tons of iron and steel which shuttle back and forth across the halls or storage areas. And it has been found that the lighter touch of women is well-adapted to this very responsible job.

As one of these little cabins glided away high above my head I saw another name with symbolic significance. There was a sign on the cabin announcing that this was the "Clara Zetkin Brigade" (or work team), and it occurred to me that the old German fighter for women's rights and socialism would have been happy to see women accepted here as equals.

Operating overhead cranes is not the only woman's job in this plant. They also dispense tools, assemble lighter machinery like gas stoves and small refrigerators for the factory's consumer goods programme, they drive lighter vehicles and also do the more traditional women's jobs in the kitchens and canteens. All in all, 18% of the employees are women. This is making a virtue of necessity, of course, for men are short in the 30—50 age group as a result of the war. But women are not only regarded as a means to "fill the gaps" — they receive equal pay for equal work and are encouraged to learn a trade, take over foremen's jobs and play an important role in factory life. Of course they are not permitted to work at certain heavy, hot or dangerous jobs.

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While picking my way through the Brobdingnagian machines in one work hall, where huge sections of future cement mills and steel rolling plants were being made, I noticed how some of the workers were attending their machines. The heavy lathe tools bit one little piece of metal after another from the heavy parts as they moved back and forth or around and around, but the men were sitting down, smoking their cigarettes or chewing an apple, and

letting the machine do its work alone for many hours at a time. Of course, they must always watch out for broken cutting tools or other difficulties and they must be past-masters of the fine art of installing their machine at the beginning of each new job. But otherwise, this work is not very exhausting, and I realised that this was a foretaste of the future, when highly-skilled worker-engineers would watch for a few hours each day while all heavy labour was done by machinery. Of course, this process may be observed in non-socialist countries, too, but it is good to know that here it can never result in redundancy or unemployment.

Walking just a little further, I saw two big black and white posters hanging from the ceiling. They were not very attractively designed, but their content was quite interesting. The first one said:

"Our factory library has many thousands of books —

How many have you already read?"

The other one announced:

"We have seen Bertolt Brecht's 'Mother Courage' and also enjoyed Gerhart Hauptmann's 'The Beaver Coat'.

When were you last in the theatre?

When are you going again to the theatre?"

This was certainly a novel message to read here among the screeching and grinding sounds of a heavy industry plant. I had seen printed placards about books or the theatre in other factories in the GDR, but somehow the home-made signs with their little reminders made a pleasant impression.

One last station of this tour through the factory is worth mentioning — the clinic. In case of illness or accident, present or pensioned-off employees of the Ernst Thaelmann Plant as well as members of their families come here to what is actually a full-scale hospital. The thirty rooms include an operation room, a dental station, two wards with 23 beds and equipment for the regular X-ray examinations of all employees, for ultra-violet and similar ray treatments and for special healing baths of all kinds. There is a well-stocked chemist's shop on the first floor. The clinic employs a total of 93 people — including six doctors (one of them a surgeon) and four dentists. In addition a number of other specialists visit here twice every week — an eye doctor, a gynecologist and an orthopedist, for example. The workers' social insurance covers all this treatment and the medicines entirely; since a generous amount of additional money is supplied by the factory under its contract with the union, treatment and especially food for the patients here are reputedly even better than in public hospitals.

Especially interesting to me was the comparison with medical treatment here when Krupp was still boss. There had been a first aid station with one nurse to deal with the thousands of workers employed here making weapons for Hitler or the Kaiser. And the 30-room hospital now being used for the welfare of the men had then been the private home of the factory director, his wife and their many servants.

(An article about a Brigade of Socialist Labour in the Ernst Thaelmann Plant will be published in a future issue of GERMAN REPORT.)

Adenauer Takes Over The One-Eyed Persuader

West German Chancellor Adenauer, in a move unprecedented in a nominally democratic state, has grabbed complete control of West Germany's second television programme, due to start operating at the beginning of 1961.

For some months Dr Adenauer has been negotiating to launch a government-controlled TV network in good time for the general elections due in West Germany next summer. There was opposition from the provincial governments, so Dr Adenauer cut through the red tape with one sweep of a pen. Acting in a personal capacity, he founded a limited company, putting up the nominal share capital apparently out of his pocket: then, in the capacity of Chancellor he granted his private company monopoly rights to run a TV service.

To give some semblance of legality to the operation, he appointed a board of governors, including his personal physician Professor Martinelli; his friend Professor Scheuner, author of a government white paper whitewashing the nazis in the West German Foreign Office; and a certain Frau Dr. Schlueter, whose only claim to the job seems to be that she is Dr Adenauer's neighbour.

Programmes for the new TV network will be provided by a big-business consortium consisting of steel magnates like Alfried Krupp, newspaper barons like Axel Springer, the Mercedes car company, and the huge chemical monopoly formerly known as IG Farben.

Commenting on the TV take-over, the London "Daily Express" stated on September 29th: "Soon Dr A. will be merrily telling millions how good he and his party are for Germany, Europe and the world, for he now possesses a vital instrument for winning votes and influencing opinion."

Chess Olympics in Leipzig

The best chess players of the world will gather in Leipzig in Democratic Germany between October 16th and November 9th for the 14th World Chess Olympiad. A total of 41 countries will be represented by 19 Grand Masters, including World Master Tal and Ex-World Master Botvinnik.

Every provision has been made for the comfort, relaxation and entertainment of the contestants and the thousands of chess fans from home and abroad who will visit the games. A special feature will be a chess exhibition, unequalled in history, which will show chess figures from all countries and historical periods, from Eskimo-carved bone chess pieces to the golden chessmen used by kings. Books, pictures and other items dealing with the "Game of Kings" have been lent by 145 museums in all parts of the world.

The "Chess Olympics" have been preceded by "miniature Olympic tournaments" in all parts of Democratic Germany, and the programme of the games includes a wide variety of meetings, debates, games for the visitors, for schoolchildren, college students, factory workers and other groups. The publicity connected with the games is making the whole country and especially Leipzig more chess-conscious than ever before.

An Apple For the Bo'sun

Tons of apples and pears, part of the extraordinarily large fruit harvest this year, will be stored in the holds of East Berlin's fleet of pleasure steamers this winter. The vessels are usually unused during the colder months. This method of cheap cold storage, which guarantees easy transport along Berlin's river and canal system, was borrowed from neighbouring Czechoslovakia.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Quite a lot of people in Berlin, both east and west, speak English, many of them very fluently.

At least they thought they did, until the last week or two. When they saw that two theatre companies from English-speaking countries were visiting the city, they rushed to the box offices to buy tickets.

After they had been to the two shows, however, the majority of the audience came out of the theatres shaking their heads sadly, and regretting the time and trouble they had put in over their text books.

The two plays in question were Synge's "Playboy of the Western World", presented in West Berlin by the Dublin Festival Theatre in deepest stage Irish; and "Sparrers Can't Sing" by Stephen Lewis, presented in East Berlin by London's famed Theatre Workshop in quick-fire Cockney.

But despite the language difficulties, both productions went down very well. I may be prejudiced because I understand the accents of Stepney better than those of County Mayo, but I think that Theatre Workshop won the contest by several lengths. East Berlin theatre critics loved the speed and precision of the performance of "Sparrers" ("Sparrows" to non-Cockneys), but they seemed slightly mystified by its lack of a message. They were even more mystified when they discovered that it was not intended to have one.

* * *

I never regarded pigeon fanciers as particularly hardened militarists myself, but some propagandists in Bonn have a different idea. On September 22nd the West German Government came out with an impressive-looking body of statistics intended to prove that the GDR is armed to the teeth, while West Germany is practically naked.

This neat piece of mathematical juggling was performed like this: first you state incorrectly the total of the GDR People's Army: then you add in all the police including the traffic cops and the fingerprint men: then you pile on the fire brigades and the factory watchmen. Since the total is still not big enough, you include in your figures all the members of the GDR Society for Sports and Technology, a vast ramification of bodies which includes the pigeon fanciers, the radio hams, the dog trainers, the amateur yachtmen and (here come the militarists) the small-bore rifle clubs. The total is still not satisfactory, so you assess how many people may have retired from the police and other uniformed bodies over the past few years and count them in as reservists. By this time you have got a very sizable number, so you announce proudly that the GDR has over one million men "standing with rifles at the ready". This is the actual phrase used in the West German announcement, and it strikes me as a very uncomfortable way of tapping a morse key, or handling racing pigeons.

But let us get away from the West German fantasy and look at the facts. The People's Army of the GDR has a strength of 90,000, and there is no intention of increasing it. Incidentally, the People's Army has no nuclear weapons. The West German Wehrmacht is 269,000 strong, it is still being built up, and already possesses considerable quantities of nuclear weapons provided by the Americans.

But if the West German Government believes the figures dreamed up by its propagandists, and distrusts the real figures, then it appears logical for it to be only too ready to accept the offer made recently by the GDR for the complete and controlled disarmament of both German states. This would dispose once and for all of the Bonn nightmare that West Germany might be over-run by an impressive army of East German yachtsmen, traffic cops, and dog trainers.

Curiously enough, Adenauer has turned a very deaf ear to the offer.

* * *

Just incidentally, did you know that dear old Grandpa Adenauer employed slave labourers during the war? He had French slaves, provided by the nazis, working in his famous rose gardens. There is no record that he treated them badly; but this can not be said about his son-in-law Hermann Josef Wehrhahn, who is married to Adenauer's daughter Libeth. Herr Wehrhahn employed many hundreds of slaves from Poland, France, Italy and the Soviet Union in his coal mine at Senftenberg; and he kept them in such filthy hutments that even the local nazi authorities were forced to protest that they were a danger to public health. I am indebted for this information to the excellent Polish weekly "Swiat", which has just interviewed one of the Polish slaves who managed to survive.

* * *

The quote of the year has been provided by a retired nazi general, Fridolin von Senger and Etterlin. In a BBC TV interview on September 30th he stated:

"The preparation of an aggressive war can never be, in my mind, regarded as a crime by anyone."

General von Senger would probably be back in a position of command in the West German Wehrmacht today if he were not over the retiring age; but I think it is fair to say that his sentiments are shared by most of the old nazi generals who command the Bonn Wehrmacht. What is General von Senger doing today, apart from drawing his general's pension? Wait for it — he is headmaster of a leading West German school.

* * *

On which side is the "iron curtain". I was prompted to ask this question this week when I started compiling a list of people from the GDR who have been prevented from visiting western countries in the past few weeks.

On September 21st, the champion GDR football team Wismut of Karl Marx Stadt was unable to play in a regular tournament game against Glenavon, in northern Ireland, because the allied authorities in West Berlin refused to give them the necessary travel documents.

A few days earlier, a group of eight musicians from the GDR, bound for a music contest in Geneva, were stopped by the West German authorities, although they had proper travel documents and Swiss visas: they had to return to the GDR and then fly to Switzerland via Czechoslovakia.

At the end of September, leading GDR track stars, including Olympic medal winners, could not compete in a London athletic contest: once again the allied authorities in West Berlin refused documents.

On September 30th the Dutch Government refused visas to film experts from the GDR who were due to attend an international festival of student films in Amsterdam. These few examples should suffice.

In the opposite direction there have been no bans. Theatre Workshop from London has had a successful tour in East Berlin: noted British athletes are due in the GDR in a few days for an athletic meet: and professors from all parts of the world will be attending the 150th Anniversary celebrations of East Berlin's Humboldt University at the beginning of November. It makes you think.

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